

**CLAIMS :-**

1. A recording medium for ink jet printing comprising:  
a substrate coated with at least one ink receiving layer; and  
at least one protective layer, wherein said protective layer is on top of said ink receiving layer and comprises a particulate polymer having film forming temperatures between 60 to 140 °C and a binder.
2. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said substrate is selected from the group consisting of paper, transparency materials, fabrics, transfer materials and polymeric substrates.
3. The recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said paper is selected from the group consisting of high wet-strength paper, label grade paper, treated paper, pigmented paper, resin coated paper, polyethylene coated paper and synthetic paper.
4. The recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said polymeric substrates are selected from the group consisting of cellulose acetates, polyesters, poly(propylene) and poly(vinyl chloride).
5. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said ink receiving layer includes at least one binder selected from the

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6. The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said ink receiving layer comprises poly (vinyl alcohol) having a degree of hydrolysis of at least 88%.
7. The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said ink receiving layer further includes one or more additives selected from the group consisting of inorganic pigments, fillers, silica, alumina, clays, calcium carbonate, dye fixing agents, cationic polymers, surfactants, cross linking agents, optical brighteners and light stabilizers.
8. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said binder in said protective layer is selected from the group consisting of poly(vinyl alcohol), copolymers of poly(vinyl alcohol), gelatin, poly(vinyl pyrrolidone), carbohydrates, gums, treated carbohydrates, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose, acrylic polymers, and mixtures thereof.



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17. An ink jet printing method comprising the steps of:
- 1) printing on to a receiving medium which comprises a substrate coated with at least one ink receiving layer and at least one upper protective layer which comprises polymeric particles having film forming temperatures between 60 to 140 °C and a binder; and
  - 2) heating the printed image to form a stable image-protecting coating.
18. A method according to claim 17, wherein said ink receiving layer and said protective layer are coated on said substrate simultaneously.

19. A method according to claim 17, wherein said protective layer is coated as an aqueous formulation on top of said ink receiving layer.
20. A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated under pressure to form the protective coating.
21. A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated by passing through a laminator.
22. A method according to claim 21, wherein an inert sheet is in contact with said protective layer and passed through said laminator.
23. A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet includes release papers or liners, silicone release liners, casting films and papers, and polyester films.
24. A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet is used to impart a high gloss, embossed pattern or security symbol to the final image.
25. A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is polyvinyl alcohol.

26. A method according to claim 17, wherein said particulate polymer comprises low density polyethylene.
27. A method according to claim 26, wherein said particulate polymer comprises low density polyethylene spherical beads having an average diameter of approximately 12 $\mu$ m.
28. A method according to claim 17, wherein said particulate polymer comprises spherical beads of a 7% acrylic acid/polyethylene copolymer having an average diameter of approximately 10 $\mu$ m.
29. A method according to claim 17, wherein the inks used to print the image on said receiving layer are selected from the groups consisting of aqueous inks and inks based on organic solvents.
30. A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is a hydrophilic binder.

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